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Light-Infantry Movements.

Present arms! there they are,
Both stretched out to me;
Strong and sturdy, smooth and white,
Fair as arms can be.

Ground arms! on the floor,
Picking up his toys;
Breaking all within his reach,
Busiest of boys.

Right wheel! off his cart,
Left wheel, too, is gone,
Horse's head is broken off,
Horse's tail is torn.

Quick step! forward, march!
Crying, too, he comes;
Had a battle with the cat—
"Scratched off both my fangs!"

Shoulder arms! here at last,
Round my neck they close;
Poor little soldier-boy close;
Off to quarters goes.

The Widow's Son.

Oh! were you at the war, in the dire southern land—
What did you hear? What did you see?
Saw you my son with a sword in his hand
Sent he by you any dear word to me?"

I came from the dread war, in the dire southern land—
Three deeds I saw done one might well die to see;
But I know not your son with a sword in his hand,
If you would hear of him paint him to me.

"Oh, he was as gentle as the soft wind in May—
'Tis not a gentle place where I have been."
"Oh, he had a smile like the outbreak of day—
Where men are dying fast smiles are not seen."

"Tell me the mightiest deeds that were done—
Deeds of chief honor—you said there were three—
Tell me of them, I am sure he did one!
"My heart shall deservy him, and cry 'this is he.'"

"I saw a man scale a tower of despair,
Went up alone—the host shouted aloud—
That was my son—he had the streams of fair hair?
"Nay, it was darker than the darkest night's cloud."

"Did he live?"
"No he died, but the fortress was won!"
And they said it was grand for a man to die so."
"Alas, for his mother! he was not my son;
"Was there no fair-haired soldier humbled the foe?"

"I saw a man charge in front of his ranks,
Full thirty yards on, in a hurry to die—
Straight as an arrow hurled at the flanks
Of a huge desert beast, ere the hunter draws nigh."

"Did he live?"
"No, he died, but the battle was won!"
"And the conquerors' cry carried his name through the air!
Be comforted, mother, he was not thy son,
"Was his forehead and gray was his hair?"

"Oh, the brow of my son was as smooth as a rose;
I kissed it last night in my dreams
I have heard of two legends from the land of the foes,
But tell me the third. You said there were three!"

"I saw a man rush from the trenches and fly
In a battery's face—but it was not to slay;
A poor little drummer had dropped down to die,
With his ankle shot through in the place where he lay;

He carried the boy, like a babe through the rain
Of the death-dealing torrent of grapeshot and shell,
And he walked at a foot's pace, because of the pain,
Laid his burden down gentle, smiled once, and then fell."

"Did he live?"
"No, he died, but he rescued the boy!"
Such a death was more noble than life, so they said;
He had streams of fair hair and a face full of joy,
And his name—

"Speak it, not! 'Tis my son, he is dead."

"Dig him a grave 'neath the red rowan tree,
Whose mosses grow softer than fringes of foam,
And lay his bed smoothly, and leave room for me,
For I shall be ready before he comes home;

And carve on his tombstone a name and a wreath,
A tale to touch hearts through the slow spreading years,
How he died—his noble and beautiful death—
And his mother, who longed for him died of her tears."

An Enormous Condor.

In the course of the day I had an opportunity of shooting a condor; it was so satiated with its repast on the carcass of a dead horse, as to suffer me to approach within pistol shot before it extended its wings to take flight, which to me was the signal to fire; and having loaded with an ample charge of pellets, my aim proved effectual and fatal. What a formidable monster did I behold in the ravine beneath me, screaming and flapping in the last convulsive struggles of life! It may be difficult to believe that the most gigantic animal that inhabits the earth or the ocean can be equalled by a tenant of the air; and those persons who have never seen a larger bird than our mountain eagle, will probably read with astonishment of a species of that same bird, in the southern hemisphere, being so large and strong as to seize an ox with its talons, and lift it into the air, whence it lets it fall to the ground in order to kill and prey upon the carcass. But this astonishment must in a great measure subside when the dimensions of the bird are taken into consideration, and which, incredible as they may appear, I now insert verbatim, from a note taken down with my own hand. "When the wings were spread they measured sixteen paces (forty feet) in extent, from point to point, the feathers are eight paces (twenty feet) in length; and the quill part two palms (eight inches) in circumference. It is said to have power sufficient to carry off a live rhinoceros."

The Man at the Door.

"No tramps here," said I, and shut the door in his face, I did. The wind blew so that I could hardly do it, and the sleet was beating on the pane, and the bare trees were groaning and moaning as if they suffered in the storm. "No tramps here; I'm a lone woman, and I'm afraid of 'em."

Then the man I hadn't seen yet, for the dark, went away from the door. Champ, champ, champ came the man back again and knocked at the door—knocked not half as loud as he did before—and I opened it hot and angry. This time I saw his face—a pale ghost of a face, with yellow-brown hair, cropped close, and great, staring blue eyes, and he put his hand against the door and held it open.

"How near is it to the next house, ma'am?" said he. "Three miles or more," said I.

"And that is not a tavern?"

"No," said I; "no drinks to be got there. It is Miss Mitten's, and she's as set against tramps as I am."

"I don't want drink," said the man, "though I do want food. You needn't be afraid to let me in, ma'am. I've been wounded, and am not able to walk far, and my clothes are thin, and it's bitter cold. I have been trying to get to my parents at Greenbank, where I can rest till I'm better, and all my money was stolen from me three days ago. You needn't be afraid; let me just lie before the fire, and only give me a crust, the staliest crust, to keep me from starving, and the Lord will bless you for it."

And then he looked at me with his wild blue eye in a way that would have made me do it, if it hadn't been that I'd seen so much of those impostors. The war was just over, and every beggar that came along said he was a soldier traveling home, and had been wounded and robbed. One who I had been fool enough to help limped away out of sight, as he thought, and then—for I was at the garret window—shouldered his crutches and tramped it with the strongest.

"No doubt your pocket is full of money," said I, "and you only want a chance to rob and murder me. Go away with you!"

Drusilla, that's my niece, was baking cakes in the kitchen. Just then she came to the door and motioned with her mouth to me: "Do let him stay, auntie." And if I hadn't had good sense, I might, but I knew better than a chick of sixteen.

"Go away with you!" says I, louder than before. "I won't have this any longer."

And he gave a kind of a groan, and took his hand from the latch, and went champ, champ, through the frozen snow again and I thought him gone, when there he was once more, hardly with an knock at all—a faint touch like a child's now.

And when I opened the door again he was quite in, and stood leaning on his cane, pale as a ghost, his eyes bigger than ever.

"Well, of all impudence!" said I.

He looked at me, and said, "Madam, I have a mother at Greenbank. I want to live to see her. I shall not if I try to go any further to night."

"They all want to see their mothers," and just then it came into my mind that I hoped my son Charley, who had been a real soldier (an officer he had come to be, mind you), wanted to see his, and would soon.

"I have been wounded, as you see," said he.

"Don't go a-showing me your hurts," said I. "They buy 'em, so they told me, to go a begging with now. I read the papers, yer see, and I'm principled, and so's our clergyman, agin giving any thing, unless it's through some well-organized society. Tramps are my abomination, and as for my keeping you all night, you can't expect that of decent folks. Go!"

Drusilla came to the door and said: "Let him stay, auntie, with her lips again, but I took no notice.

So he went, and this time he did not come back; and I sat down by the fire and smelt the baking cakes and the apples stewing and the tea drawing on the stove, and I ought to have been very comfortable; but I wasn't. Something seemed tugging at my heart all the time.

I gave the fire a poke, and lit another candle to cheer myself up, and I went to my work-basket to get the sock I had been knitting for my Charley, and as I went to get it, I saw something lying on the floor. I picked it up. It was a tobacco-pouch, ever so much like the one I gave Charley with fringe around it, and written on it in ink, "From C. F. to R. H.;" and inside was a bit of tobacco and an old pipe and a letter, a rumpled old letter; and when I spread it out, I saw on the top, "My dear son."

I knew the beggar must have dropped it, and my heart gave one big thump, as though it had been turned into a hammer.

Perhaps the story was true and he had a mother. I shivered all over, and the fire and candles and the nice comfortable smells might as well not have been at all. I was cold and wretched.

And over and over again had I to say to myself what I had heard our pastor say so often, "Never give anything to chance beggars, my friends; always bestow your alms on worthy persons, through well-organized societies," before I could get a bit of comfort. And what an old fool I was to cry, I thought, when I found my cheeks wet.

But I did not cry long, for, as I sat there, dash and crash and jingle came a sleigh over the road, and it stopped at our gate, and I heard my Charley's voice crying, "Halloa, mother!"

And I went out to the door, and had him in my arms—my great, tall, handsome, brown son. And there he was

in his uniform, with his pretty shoulder-straps, and as hearty as if he had never been through any hardships. He had to leave me to put the horse up, and then I had by the fire my own son. And Drusilla, who had been up stairs, and had been crying—why, I wonder?—came down all in a flutter—for they were like brother and sister—and he kissed her, and she kissed him, and then she went to set the table, and the nice hot things smoked on a cloth as white as snow; and how Charley enjoyed them! But once, in the midst of all, I felt a frightened feeling come over me, I know I turned pale, for Drusilla said, "What is the matter, Aunt Fairfax?"

I said nothing; but it was this: Kind o' like the ghost of a step going champ, champ over the frozen snow; kind o' like the ghost of a voice saying, "Let me lie on the floor before your fire, and give me any kind of a crust;" kind o' like some one that had a mother down on the wintry road, and freezing and starving to death there. That is what it was. But I put it away and only thought of Charley.

We drew up together by the fire when the tea was done, and he told us things about the war I'd never heard of before—how the soldiers suffered, and what weary marches and short rations they sometimes had. And then he told me how his life had been in danger; how he had been set upon by the foe and badly wounded; and how, at the risk of his own life, a fellow soldier had saved him, and carried him away, fighting his path back to camp.

"I'd never seen you but for him," says my Charley. "And if there's a man on earth I love, it's Rob Hadway—the dearest, best fellow! We've shared each other's rations and drank from the same canteen many and many a time; and if I had a brother, I couldn't think more of him."

"Why didn't you bring him home to see your mother, Charley?" said I. "Why, I'd love him, too, and anything I could do for him, for the man who saved my boy's life, couldn't be enough. Send for him, Charley."

But Charley shook his head, and covered his face with his hands.

"Mother," said he, "I don't know whether Rob Hadway is alive or dead to-day. While I was still in the ranks he was taken prisoner. And military prisons are poor places to live in, mother. I'd give my right hand to be able to do him good; but I can find no trace of him. And he has a mother, too, and she is so fond of him! She lives at Greenbank, poor old lady! My dear, good, noble Rob, the preserver of my life!"

And I saw Charley was nearly crying. Not to let us see the tears, he got up and went to the mantle-piece. I did not look around until I heard a cry:

"Great Heaven! what is it?"

And I turned, and Charley had the tobacco-pouch the man had dropped, in his hand.

"Where did this come from?" said he; "I feel as though I had seen a ghost. I gave this to Rob Hadway the day he saved me. We soldiers had not much to give, you know, and he vowed never to part with it while he lived. How did it come here, mother?"

And I fell back in my chair, white and cold, and said I: "A wandering tramp left it here. Never your Rob, my dear; never your Rob. He must have been an impostor. I wouldn't have turned away a person really in want. O, no, no; it's another pouch, child, or he stole it. A tall fellow with blue eyes and yellow-brown hair; wounded, he said, and going to his mother at Greenbank. Not your Rob."

And Charley stood staring at me with clenched hands; and said he:

"It was my Rob! it was my dear old Rob, wounded and starving!—my dear old Rob, who saved my life, and you have driven him out in such a night as this, mother. My mother to use Rob so!"

"Condemn me, Charley," said I; condemn me, if you like; I'm afraid God will. Three times he came back; three times he asked only for a crust and a place to lie, and I drove him away—I—I—and he's lying in the road now. O! if I had known! O! if I had known!"

And Charley caught up his hat.

"O! Rob, my dear friend."

And then—I never saw the girl in such taking. Down went Drusilla on her knees as if she was saying her prayers, and says she:

"Thank God, I dare to do it!"

And says she again to me:

"O! aunt, I've been trembling with fright, not knowing what you'd say to me. I took him in the kitchen way. I couldn't see him go faint and hungry and wounded, and I put him in the spare chamber over the parlor; and I've been so frightened all the while."

"Lord bless you. Drusilla!" said Charley.

"Amen," said I.

And she, getting bolder, went on:

"And I took him up some hot short-cakes and apple-sauce and tea," says she. And I took him a candle, and a hot brick for his feet; and I told him to eat, and go to bed in the best chamber, Aunt Fairfax, with the white counterpane and all; and I locked him in and put the key in my pocket, and I told him that he should have one night's rest, and that no one should turn him out unless they walked over my dead body."

And Drusilla said it like an actress in a tragedy, and went off into hysterics the moment the words were out of her mouth. She'd been expected to be half-murdered you know, and the girl was but sixteen, and always minded me before as if I was her mother.

Never was there any old sinner so happy as I was that night, so thankful to the good Lord; and it would have